

Message Text

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FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

FOL TEL SENT SECSTATE INFO BEIRUT, TEL AVIV, USUN NY
FROM CAIRO 141355 Z APR 73

QUOTE: CAIRO 1123

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LE, US, EG

SUBJECT: CHARGES OF US COMPLICITY IN ISRAELI RAID
ON LEBANON

REF: STATE 68250

1. SINCE NEITHER ACTING FONMIN HATEM NOR FONMIN
UNDERSECRETARY SHOUKRI WERE AVAILABLE, USINT OFFICER
TOOK UP SUBJECT OF FALSE PALESTINIAN ALLEGATIONS WITH
SAAD KHALIL, DIRECTOR OF NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS.
USINT OFFICER OPENED CONVERSATION BY CITING MALICIOUS
AND UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS CURRENTLY BEING PUT OUT BY
CERTAIN PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS. HE NOTED THAT
THESE CHARGES WERE CREATING AN UNHELPFUL POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE
AND USG WAS CONCERNED BY FACT THAT THESE CHARGES HAD
BEEN BROADCAST OVER EGYPTIAN RADIO STATIONS AND HAD
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APPEARED IN THE CAIRO PAPERS. USG WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT SUCH ALLEGATIONS COULD INFLAME THE PUBLIC AND LEAD TO CRIMINAL ACTS AGAINST AMERICAN CITIZENS AND AMERICAN PROPERTY.

2. USINT OFFICER THEN CITED SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS MADE IN CAIRO MEDIA AND ALSO DREW KHALIL'S ATTENTION TO THE PARTICULARLY INFLAMMATORY STATEMENT MADE OVER RADIO ALGIERS ON APRIL 10. HE SAID THAT HE KNEW THAT EGYPT, AS A CIVILIZED COUNTRY, DID NOT APPROVE OF THE KILLING OF INNOCENT PEOPLE OR WANTON DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY. BUT THE STATEMENTS NOW BEING BROADCAST OVER EGYPTIAN MEDIA AND PRINTED IN EGYPTIAN PRESS COULD LEAD TO EXACTLY THAT RESULT. USINT OFFICER THEN SAID THAT THE US GOVERNMENT REQUESTED THE HELP OF THE GOE IN CONTROLLING THE DISSEMINATION OF SUCH INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS.

3. KHALIL REPLIED THAT THE STATEMENTS APPEARING IN THE PAPERS AND OVER THE RADIO DID NOT REPRESENT THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT BUT THAT THE NEWS MEDIA HAD THE RIGHT TO REPORT NEWS AS IT APPEARED IN INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICES AND ELSEWHERE. ARAFAT'S STATEMENTS ARE NEWS AND THE EGYPTIAN PRESS, LIKE OTHER NEWS MEDIA AROUND THE WORLD, HAD A RIGHT TO PUBLISH THEM.

4. USINT OFFICER REPLIED THAT USG BELIEVED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT HAD A RESPONSIBILITY IN PREVENTING PUBLICATION OF STATEMENTS THAT WERE OBVIOUSLY FALSE AND DESIGNED ONLY TO INFLAME THE PUBLIC AND ENCOURAGE CRIMINAL ACTIONS. THE UNITED STATES, WHICH HAS A LONG TRADITION OF PRESS FREEDOM, PLACES DEFINITE LIMITATIONS ON THE PUBLISHING OF LIBELOUS OR INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS. AS ONE FAMOUS AMERICAN JUSTICE HAD OBSERVED, "FREE SPEECH DOES NOT MEAN THE RIGHT TO SHOUT FIRE IN A CROWDED THEATER." WE WERE ASKING THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT TO LIMIT MEDIA COVERAGE SO AS TO EXCLUDE STATEMENTS THAT MIGHT CAUSE VIOLENCE OR OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIONS AGAINST AMERICAN CITIZENS AND PROPERTY.

5. KHALIL SAID THAT EGYPT IS INDEED A CIVILIZED
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COUNTRY AND DOES NOT SUPPORT TERRORISM OR THE KILLING

OF INNOCENT PERSONS. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD SEE THAT OUR APPROACH ON THIS SUBJECT IS PASSED TO THE PROPER AUTHORITIES.

6. THEN KHALIL RAISED SUBJECT OF HAFEZ ISMAIL' S TRIP TO WASHINGTON AND THE SUBSEQUENT NEW YORK TIMES STORY CONCERNING NEW SHIPMENTS OF ARMS TO ISRAEL. HE ASKED WHY THE UNITED STATES HAD DESTROYED THE BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF HAFEZ' S TRIP BY LEAKING THE NEWS OF NEW ARMS COMMITMENTS TO ISRAEL SO SOON AFTERWARDS. USINT OFFICER POINTED OUT THAT US GOVERNMENT HAD MADE NO STATEMENT AT THAT TIME ON NEW ARMS COMMITMENTS TO ISRAEL. IT WAS WELL KNOWN BY ALL PARTIES THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS COMMITTED TO MAINTAIN THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THAT THE US GOVERNMENT DID NOT WISH ANOTHER OUTBREAK OF WAR IN THE AREA. WITHIN THIS CONTEXT, IMPLEMENTING DECISIONS ARE MADE FROM TIME TO TIME AT LOWER LEVELS CONCERNING DELIVERY SCHEDULES AND THE TYPES OF WEAPONS THAT WE SUPPLY TO ISRAEL. THESE, HOWEVER, ARE NOT PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED AND THERE WAS CERTAINLY NO INTENTION ON THE PART OF US GOVERNMENT TO EMBARRASS HAFEZ ISMAIL OR SADAT BY LEAKING TO THE PRESS INFORMATION CONCERNING NEW ARMS ARRANGEMENTS IMMEDIATELY ON THE HEELS OF ISMAIL' S VISIT TO WASHINGTON. GREENE UNQUOTE ROGERS

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